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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603

October 24, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C St, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I write to express my grave concern regarding the increasing threats to religious freedom throughout the Middle East. I would like to request that you use your official powers to identify, expose, sensitize and pressure offending governments to end this disturbing practice throughout this region.

The freedom of religion is one of our most precious constitutional liberties. On March 7, 2013, I introduced Senate Resolution 69, calling for the protections of religious minority rights and freedoms in the Arab world in response to the actions, or inactions, of many governments throughout this region which continue to tolerate violations of this basic human right.

Here are a number of examples:

-March 9, 2013, a Muslim crowd attacked a Christian neighborhood in Lahore, Pakistan, burning over 150 houses and 2 churches, killing 4 and wounding 28.

-September 22, 2013, a suicide bomber attacked the All Saints Church, one of the oldest churches in Pakistan, after a Sunday service, killing 78, including 41 women and children.

-In Pakistan, there is a growing trend of Muslim extremists abducting young Hindu girls and forcing them to convert to Islam; often they are raped and forced to marry their kidnapper.

-October 16, 2013, the Syrian government fired four artillery shells at the Greek Catholic Cathedral of Constantine and Helen, one of the oldest churches in Syria and the world, located in the rebel-controlled town of Yabroud.

-October 21, 2013, masked gunmen shot at a wedding party at a church in Cairo, Egypt, killing four, including two young girls.

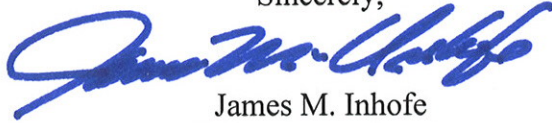
-August 2013, 40 Coptic churches were destroyed in the southern, rural provinces of Egypt.

-October 17, 2013, ten bombs exploded in Shi'ite districts of Baghdad killing 44 people, and a suicide bomber drove into a village killing 15 Shabaks, who are mainly Shi'ites.

The increasing attacks against Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East is a violation of the basic human right of the freedom of religion. The United States must send a strong message that it will not accept such violations. I respectfully ask that you use your official powers to identify, expose, sensitize and pressure offending governments to end this disturbing practice throughout the Middle East.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James M. Inhofe", written in a cursive style.

James M. Inhofe
United States Senate